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HUMAN RELATIONS TRAINING AND ITS EFFECT ON THE TEACHER-LEARNING PROCESS IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES.

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TO TEST THE EFFECTS OF SENSITIVITY TRAINING ON STUDENTS, RANDOMLY-SELECTED 12TH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN A T-GROUP FOR THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF THE FALL 1966 SEMESTER. ANOTHER GROUP, TAUGHT BY THE SAME TEACHER, WAS NOT EXPOSED TO SENSITIVITY TRAINING, WHILE A SECOND CONTROL GROUP WAS TAUGHT BY A TEACHER WITHOUT T-GROUP EXPERIENCE. EACH GROUP WAS GIVEN (1) MEYER'S SOCIAL ATTITUDE SCALE--A PRE-TEST AND A POST-TEST, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD AND 6 MONTHS LATER, (2) THE LIPHE-VALED SCALE, WHICH WAS DEVELOPED BY THE T-GROUP TEACHER AND ADMINISTERED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE FIRST 3 WEEKS AND 6 MONTHS LATER, (3) A COMPOSITION "WHAT HAS MEANT MOST TO ME DURING MY SENIOR YEAR" TO WRITE, AND (4) A TASK TO PERFORM--THE SELECTION OF A SONG, 3 PICTURES, AND A 10-MINUTE TAPE RECORDING WHICH BEST REPRESENTED THEIR CLASS, TO BE PUT INTO A TIME CAPSULE. IT WAS FOUND THAT (A) T-GROUP TRAINING HAS AN IMPACT ON THE CLASSROOM GROUP AS EVIDENCED BY STATEMENTS OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS AND BY TAPE RECORDINGS OF THE 3 CLASSES WHICH REVEALED A CHANGE IN THE LANGUAGE AND PROCESS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL CLASS. (B) THE TESTS USED DID NOT HAVE A BROAD ENOUGH RANGE TO DETECT THESE CHANGES, (C) BOTH THE COMPOSITION AND THE TASK REVEALED THAT THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP'S BEHAVIOR WAS DIFFERENT FROM TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR. THE PROGRAM IS CONTINUING WITH MODIFICATIONS. (AW)

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HUMAN RELATIONS TRAINING AND ITS EFFECT ON THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES

Sponsored by the New York State Education Department
in cooperation with
East Williston School District

PROGRESS REPORT #2
August 1967

A summary of the final report
1966-67

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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A Summary of Findings: The 1966-67 Year

The present project represents a major innovative intervention into the classroom setting. Particularly, it represents the first time that students and teacher have been exposed to the t-group process of sensitivity training directly within their social studies class. T-group, a laboratory training group technique, was developed by the National Training Laboratories, formerly a subsidiary of the National Education Society. This kind of direct intervention has been used more frequently in the field of business, but with the growing need in education for all parties involved to examine themselves, their behaviors, the way these behaviors are received by others, and the way behavior of others affects the individual recipient, t-group training is finding its way into the educational arena.

It was the purpose of this first year of intervention to determine the following:

1. Can sensitivity training produce a classroom climate that will encourage more fruitful and enduring learning experiences?
2. Can sensitivity training offer a medium for decision making on school matters that will involve all parties concerned?
3. Can a social studies curriculum be directed in a class climate that may allow students to develop freedom to examine feelings and opinions, to encourage good listening habits, and can teacher and students become aware of the responses involved in the creation of such an open and honest social-emotional classroom climate?
4. What kinds of evaluative protocols or procedures are available or need to be developed to measure the effectiveness of this sensitivity training technique?

Briefly, the first year of the project involved the use of one social studies teacher who had been a member of a pilot group of teachers, school administrator, community adults and students in a t-group experience; 45 12th grade students (volunteers); and 20 control group 12th grade students taught by another social studies teacher who had not been exposed to t-group. The 45 volunteer students were randomly selected to be in two groups taught by the same teacher. One group received direct t-group intervention under the leadership of an NTL trained group leader during the first three weeks of the Fall 1966 semester; the other did not receive such intervention. The effect was to produce two 12th grade groups in the Problems in American Democrary course taught by the same teacher, one in an experimental setting, the other in the traditional setting. The third group served as an outside control group.

Each group was administered the following:

1. Meyer's Social Attitude Scale - Pre-test, post-immediately after the first three weeks of the school year, and post-six months (February) after the beginning of the school year.
2. LIPHE-VALED Scale - sampling selected by the t-group leader who developed the total scale - immediately following the first three weeks of the school year, and again six months later.
3. A task to perform: what words to one song, three pictures, and a ten-minute tape would you put in a time capsule to best represent your class group? - administered over a three day period in February 1967.
4. A composition task administered to all 12th grade students by the English department in March, 1967: What Has Meant Most to me During My Senior Year.

As explained in the letter accompanying this summary, the complete final report will be the first activity of the continuation of the project. Therefore, the material which follows represents the outcomes of the first year, and the conclusions reached at this stage of the project. Perhaps the following questions and the answers given will serve as the most effective way to summarize this report.

1. Does the t-group have an impact on the classroom group?

   Answer: yes.

   Reasons:

   a. The students in the classroom so indicated in the short-term and long term opportunities given to them for response via the tasks performed, the composition assignment, and their observed behavior in the social studies class and in other settings within their senior year high school experience.

   b. The parents of the experimental group students responded to a questionnaire. Of the 16 out of a possible 24 responses received, 10 enthusiastically reported the t-group experience to be the most significant educational experience offered to their children, and would have them repeat such an experience if offered to them. Four indicated that they would probably want their children to have a similar experience with some modification. Only two responses were negative.

   c. The classroom teacher involved not only reported a change in his own concept of teaching, but as a team-leader of the 12th grade social studies teachers, he received a number of reactions denoting changes in his behavior with the team members,

indicating that his new reflections on the relationship between curriculum and the production of an open classroom climate were affecting his leadership and the decision making of the team. He has since attended the National Training Laboratories Program at Bethel, Maine, so that he would be qualified to be a group leader.

d. Tapes of the three classes reveal a change in the language and process of the experimental class, wherein the usual teacher-initiated - student-response pattern reported as the typical classroom procedure in the Bellack studies of "The Language of the Classroom" was not the predominant mode of operation.

2. Does the quantitative data back up the noted reactions?

Answer: no.

Reasons:

a. Sufficient evidence was not provided to support the reactions.

The tests used (Meyer's Social Values Test and the LIPHE-VALED Scale) did not have a broad enough range to detect differences.

The Meyer's test does not discriminate with this suburban population.

The LIPHE-VALED questionnaire was resisted for the same reasons as the Meyer's test proved to be inadequate in range.

3. Was it possible to receive sufficient quantitative data from class standing or students' social studies grades?

Answer: no

Reasons:

a. The school does not reorder class standing at the end of the

senior year since they have found no relative change in previous years when such a procedure was followed.

b. The end of the year social studies grades not not discriminate because different teachers were involved, different content was emphasized, and different final examinations were administered.

4. Did the two tasks given reveal any significant information of any noted trend?

Answer: yes

Reasons:

a. The Time Capsule task was taped. Only in the experimental group do you find an entire day spent on the matter of whether or not the task was worth while enough for the group to expend its time and effort. The outside control group behavior was typical of the traditional classroom behavior as described by Bellack. One student took over, and directed the class towards the accomplishment of its task. He initiated questions, accepted or rejected responses, determined that decisions had been made.

b. The examination of the compositions revealed that the typical senior valued college acceptance, senior privileges, and either freedom for extra-curricular activities or choice of certain intellectual pursuits as the outstanding aspect of the year. Most, however, reported on how wasteful and boring their school years had been. In the experimental class, 12 out of 19 responses highlighted the t-group experience either directly or in terms of the new self-awareness and awareness of others, and the desire to own one's feelings openly and honestly that had been developed this senior year. Of these, 7 had voluntarily written about the

t-group experience immediately (within 2-3 weeks) after it had occurred. An examination of both writings showed that the reactions remained just as strongly in favor of value of such experience in the terms mentioned above.

In the volunteer control group taught by the same teacher as the experimental group, 7 of the 20 writing reported that their teacher had met with them on a voluntary basis after class and enabled them to have an experience similar to that of the t-group. This they felt made the year significant for them.

The outside control group (14 responded) revealed patterns similar to that of the typical senior.

The accomplishment of the tasks, then, showed that the learnings about self and others, an expected outcome of t-group training, and a desired outcome of the course of study of Problems of Democracy, had a lasting impact on those who had participated in the t-group experience.

5. The questions these outcomes raised related to the following:

   a. Instruments for the coming year: Thurstone Test of Mental Alertness, Test of Economic Understanding, Principles of Democracy Test, Survey of Interpersonal Values, and Survey of Personal Values. These tests have proved to be significantly more discriminating in a variety of populations.

   b. A noted distinction between the classroom setting and the laboratory setting of National Testing Labs indicated that the t-group emphasis on personal growth must be accompanied by an emphasis on task-orientation. The school curriculum places an outer-directed demand

on the class group which this year's experimental class and teacher found difficult to deal with. Such a task orientation has been designed into the 1967-68 year program.

c. The amount of training a classroom teacher needs has become of paramount concern. This year's teacher has gone to NTL for for extended training. We will observe him as he handles his class this coming year in contrast to a teacher who has had only the minimum amount of training, but who will be directed and supported by a trained t-group leader.

d. A noted impact on the school, which will be mentioned subsequently, suggests plans for self-renewing or regenerating trainers from within the social studies department and within other departments of this school.

e. A repeat of the pilot mixed group (community adults, teachers, and students) has resulted in effecting positive school-community relations.

f. The noted dissatisfaction of an educational program that typically emphasizes the cognitive development of the students has opened the whole department to question t-group training as a means for allowing cognitive development to feed into and support the affective development of all parties in the educational experience. Three Board of Education members, the Superintendent of Schools, the high school principal, and 14 teachers have voluntarily engaged in t-group experiences. One of the teachers has gone to Bethel for more complete training, and the School Superintendent and the principal attended Personal Growth Laboratories at Bethel. Such an impact on a school and community deserves continued and more precise analysis. The plans for this are spelled out in our renewal statement.

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APPENDIX I

TO: Superintendent of Schools, East Williston
Principals and Staff of The Wheatley School
Participants in the Pilot Project - January-March 1966

FROM: Dr. Julian Roberts

REPORT OF PILOT PROJECT IN GROUP SENSITIVITY TRAINING HELD BETWEEN JANUARY AND MARCH 1966

In June 1965, a series of meetings between a steering committee selected by the Board of Education of the East Williston School District and Dr. Julian Roberts of Yeshiva University's Ferkauf Graduate School, were held to explore the question of unexamined attitudes of East Williston students towards people other than those in their own community. The problem posed during the many discussions related to the way in which attitudes of students, teachers, and community members could be identified, understood, and in some instances altered on the basis of a clearer understanding of the attitude expressed and the degree of commitment to act upon such an attitude when the occasion presents itself.

An example frequently cited by the planning committee related to the fact that the rather homogeneous socio-economic backgrounds of the students at The Wheatley Schools did not provide these students with knowledge and understanding about those persons who come from low socio-economic backgrounds and multi-ethnic inheritance, persons with whom Wheatley graduates would some day be working.

A number of possible means for developing understanding based on knowledge were further explored. Research has shown that superficial contact, such as visits to low socio-economic neighborhoods, or spending time in a school in such a neighborhood, or hearing lectures about the plight of less fortunate socio-economic groups does little more than touch the periphery of real understanding, does a little less toward affecting attitude development and almost nothing in terms of attitude change. That these techniques have some value as adjuncts to more effective means for providing the goals indicated above leaves little argument. What resulted, then was the following pilot project.

The Rationale for the Pilot Project

The most exciting of the recent consideration of curriculum in our schools comes from people such as B. O. Smith, Hilda Taba, Herbert F. LaGrone, Arno Bellack and others. In their considerations, backed by research in curriculum, teaching and learning they point to the need for understanding the cognitive styles of teachers and learners. They point, too, to the development of clearer understanding on the part of the teacher with regard to the nature of the discipline involved, the structure as Bruner calls it, or the content material which, in turn, provides the means for interaction between teacher and learner. It is this interaction, this process which bears closer analysis as a means for effecting both understanding and identification of attitudes and resulting change.

With regard to interaction, industry has gone ahead of education in the use of group dynamics as a process that may be used to effect attitude change. The National Training Laboratories has held many workshops in the training of leaders to assume the responsibility for directing groups in the process of interaction, face to face, in order to produce understanding, identification of the nature of things and resultant attitudinal response. In all of these reports from industry and from the NTL, the important thing to realize is that the group in question must work together to identify the specific problem they wish to cope with.

In consideration of the above, the planning group recommended to the steering committee that they initiate a pilot group in the technique of group dynamics as a means for identifying and becoming aware of a problem area, if not a specific problem, which is of great concern to students at The Wheatley School.

Some of the literature in support of this procedure has already been cited. Here are a few references for your consideration.

Bradford, LeLand P., Jack R. Gibb, and Kenneth D. Benne (Eds.). T-Group Theory and Laboratory Method. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1964.

Bruner, Jerome S. The Process of Education. Vintage Book V234. New York: Random House, 1960.

LaGrone, Herbert F. "A Proposal for the Revision of the Pre-Professional Component of a Program of Teacher Education," American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, (references to the work of B. O. Smith, N. Broudy, Arno Bellack, Hilda Taba and others are included).

Hawkinshire, Frank Parents, Teachers, Youth: A Teenage Weekend Laboratory, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 1962.

Mellinson, Thomas J. "Gifted Underachievers: A Follow-up Study of Four Types of Treatment," National Training Laboratories Subscription Series #3, 1964.

The latter are two studies involving the techniques we are suggesting herein. They were used successfully with students and parents and teachers involved.

The Pilot Project (January-March 1966)

The pilot project was developed with the over-all purpose of training students, teachers, a school administrator, and adult members of a homogeneous community to understand one another and to be able to work together more effectively. There were four sub-purposes in the project:

1. To teach children a method of approach to human relations through inquiry.

2. To demonstrate a teaching-learning technique.

3. To improve the relationships and understanding between youth and adults.

4. To explore the possibility of having students and adults transfer what they learn about dealing with conflict between adults and youth to other realms of conflict.

The major technique used was that developed by the National Training Laboratory to sensitize and train a group of youngsters, teachers, and community residents in human relations. The project included 15 trainees: seven 11th grade students from The Wheatley School, two teachers of social studies, and one teacher of physical education from The Wheatley School, the East Williston School Superintendent, and four adult members of the community which is served by the school.

Under the direction of a T-Group leader trained by the National Training Laboratory (a subsidiary of the National Education Association) and an attending observer-consultant, the group met for ten weekly sessions and spent one weekend living away from the community from Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon. The group had two subsequent meetings;one to determine the plans for the current project; the other to speak to representatives from the school and community in order to share the results of the pilot study with them.

The rationale for using representatives from the three groups indicated above came from the experience in industry which shows that positive changes in attitudes and behavior were effected only in those cases where lower echelon or subordinate personnel have been brought together with members of upper echelons. Only when all groups involved help to formulate the problem, work on the specific task or tasks identified, and re-examine together the way in which the tasks have been handled can positive results be obtained. Only then can the values of inquiry, willingness to expose ideas and plans to empirical testing, the value of hearing the other person out, and the value of being open and making available to other members of the group one's own opinions and reactions be realized.

A T-group is a relatively unstructured group in which individuals participate as learners. The data for learning are not outside these individuals or remote from their immediate experience within the T-group. The data are transactions among members, their own behavior in the group, as they struggle to create a productive and viable organization, a miniature society; and as they work to stimulate and support one another's learning within that society. T-group members must establish a process of inquiry in which data about their own behaviors are collected and analyzed simultaneously with the experience which generates behaviors. Learnings thus achieved are tested and generalized for later use. Each individual may learn about his own motives, feelings, and strategies in dealing with other persons. He also learns of the reactions he produces in others as he interacts with them. From the confrontation of intentions and effects, he locates barriers to full and autonomous functioning in his relations with others. Out of these he may develop new images of potentiality in himself and seek help from others in converting potentialities into actualities.

Each individual may learn also about groups in the processes of helping to build one. He may develop skills of membership and skills for changing and improving his social environment as well as himself. The staff who work with T-groups do not see any necessary opposition between participation in groups and autonomous individual functioning, though they are well aware that opposition does occur in many associations of our lives and that group forces may be used to inhibit personal development. In the T-group, on the contrary, the objective is to mobilize group forces to support the growth of members as unique individuals simultaneously with their growth as collaborators. Influences among peers are paramount in this learning process. In the T-group, members develop their own skills in giving and receiving help. They learn to help the trainer (or teacher) as he assists in the development of individual and group learnings.

Objectives:

The National Training Lab lists the following five factors as most important objectives of human relations sensitivity training:

Self-insight.
Better understanding of other persons and awareness of one's impact on them.
Better understanding of group processes and increased skill in achieving group effectiveness.
Increased recognition of the characteristics of larger social systems.
Greater awareness of the dynamics of change.

A training laboratory tries to create a climate encouraging learnings, understandings, insights, skills in the areas of self, group and organization. The preliminary examination of the responses of the participants to two questionnaires indicates that a notable degree of achievement of these objectives had been reached.

An important outcome of T-group, is that each individual may learn about groups in the processes of helping to build one. He may develop skills of membership and skills for changing and improving his social environment as well as himself. In the T-group, although the members become aware that participation in groups is sometimes in conflict with their desire for autonomous individual functioning, the objective is to mobilize group forces to support the growth of members as unique individuals simultaneously with their growth as collaborators. Members develop their own skills in giving and receiving help. They learn to help the leader or teacher, as he assists in the development of individual and group learnings. (Note: this definition of the T-group, based on Bradford and Benne, inherently contains the elements of living in a democracy. Thus you may see why our new proposal uses the setting of the classroom in Problems of Democracy.)

The group exhibited all of the clinical stages of group development as described by Bradford and Benne in T-group Theory and Laboratory Method. There was the initial step of seeking group identity in the struggle for leadership exhibited by at least two of the adults. There was the more ready willingness of the young adults to share feelings and opinions at an earlier stage of the group process. There was the gradual cohesiveness of the group generated by a growing feeling of concern for being a part of the group and then for others in the group. The climax in achieving the kind and quality of interaction and exchange, support and positive opposition, and genuine understanding of how one can come to live with a variety of persons and feelings and yet operate effectively as both individual and group member was reached during the two-day week-end spent at Montauk Point. Such remarks as, "I suddenly realized that I didn't have to impress everybody all of the time," or "I do find it difficult to be warm and friendly, but now that I understand why I am this way, perhaps I will be a little freer in the future," indicate the kinds of realizations reported.

Just how these statements reflect the actual outcomes of the T-group experiences will be seen in the analysis of the references to questionnaires given to the group members. However, one must add the reports of observers of these participants when they returned to their own settings. "What happened to X at that week-end? He walks through the halls with head up and greets people now." "Y is still 'obnoxious' as fathers are, but he is more pleasant about it now." "Z seems to take things in a more relaxed way. Why he would have had a fit if the same thing happened a month ago." "Miss Q went to the dining room in dungarees. Imagine!" "Mr. P. is really a human being."

The above are only samplings of some of the noticed changes in behavior. There were some statements by parents who did not participate in the T-group that a child was pretty much unchanged in behavior, but somehow easier to live with. The questionnaires used, however, reflected more positive feelings. (See appendices A and B.)

It is important to bear in mind that this pilot project was exploratory in nature and not experimentally designed. Most of all, we were interested in studying the process of T-group when it involved the multi-faceted composition of the community, as this one did.

Questionnaire A

This was administered about two and one-half months after the final T-group session in an attempt to get the participant's appraisal of any noted changes in his behavior towards others (1-9), in his feelings towards others (10-19), in his attitudes towards self (21-31), and in his perception of others' attitudes towards him (32-40). The examination of the responses reveals:

I. 1-9. Behavior towards others.

(a) definite increase in ability to assert beliefs and feelings, and in willingness to speak about feelings and in sensitivity to people's feelings.

(b) in (2, 3, 5, 7), the sensitivity range reported was from slight to definite increase.

(c) in (8), productivity on the job, the majority reported no change.

II. 10-20. Feelings towards others.

(a) in seven of the items (10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19), the majority reported definite increases.

(b) in three items (12, 13, 14), the majority reported no difference.

(c) in one item (20), 9 reported a definite decrease, 4 reported no change and one a slight change.

Item 20 is "tense feeling when alone with people" so that a majority for decrease would be considered a positive change.

Items 10, 11 and 15-19 relate to increased feeling, insight and interest in others.

III. 21-31. Attitudes towards self.

There was an almost even distribution in this category between no change and slight change, although more of the remaining

people indicated a definite change rather than a decrease. Perhaps the area of self is most difficult to assess objectively.

IV. Others towards self.

In almost every area there were more reports of slight to definite increases, the remaining reports falling in the no change category. This was true of all but item 32 (defensiveness) in which most reports were from slight to definite decrease.

Responses to Questionnaire A, then, reflect a generally positive reaction to participation in the T-group.

Questionnaire B

This was an open-end series of three questions:

1. What do you consider to have been the most significant moment (or moments) of our recent group experience?

2. If you were asked by a stranger to describe your recent group experience and to indicate what you think the most important outcomes from this experience to be, how would you respond?

3. Is there anything else you would like to react to with regard to any aspect of the group experience?

Student Replies

1. (a) the weekend; the openness it brought about; the feeling of ecstasy - X's experience.

   (b) closeness of the group, the group's support of "me".

   (c) natural-relaxed feeling; friendship with some adults.

   (d) first adult-student confrontations; helped understand process of forming relationships.

2. (a) human appreciation - observe more keenly; awareness of self and others; left with understanding.

   (b) not to judge people on first impulse; clashes bring knowledge.

   (c) don't have to prove myself constantly; emotional response of one to one relationship more important than intellectual response.

(d) people can react to others mainly emotionally; intellectual barriers are broken; excessive verbalization frowned on but free expression of prejudice and feelings encouraged; provides an emotional foundation and sensitivity prerequisite to all personal attachments; individual forced to react with himself.

3. (a) more to have opportunity.

(b) treasured experience; more participants.

Adult Replies

1. (a) emotional upheaval of week-end.

(b) sympathy caused in others when one member is in trouble.

(c) X - week-end in particular; very strong involvement with teenagers; feelings generated when student participants expressed feelings towards adults as possible parents.

(d) one adult indicated that the wonderful feelings from week-end were not sustained; my conservative nature has prevailed.

2. (a) learn about one's self as well as about others; if willing, you could see how others see and hear you; intimacy, trust, rapport developed between individuals of various age groups; understanding and respect for one another despite differences in feelings and emotions.

(b) talking to others leads to understanding and we can modify our own behavior.

(c) feelings exposed; "I am unique and available as a feeling person"; more active emotional content in relationship with others; no great community or school impact derived.

3. (a) people left out are resentful but no one dropped out; may do away with control over frankness with others.

(b) apply project to a particular problem.

(c) leader's role - unusual talents; conflicts of generations handled by adult-teenage group composition.

Administration-Faculty Replies

1. (a) Monday after week-end possible to express feelings more warmly; concern over possible alienation of the one person absent from the week-end.

   (b) week-end - unique human experience especially when X and others exchanged feelings without verbalizing.

2. (a) possible to be open and honest in communication - this is more helpful than basic liking for each other; people care and show concern for others when they begin to know them; communication more than we think it is.

   (b) development of sincere and significant degree of self-awareness; helps teacher become aware of dynamics of actual learning situation through interaction with others.

   (c) people find their way back to emotional honesty of childhood; allows us to touch one another; makes possible disagreements that are truly intellectual.

3. (a) strong reaction of people associated with group members (both positive and negative reactions experienced).

   (b) week-end was the greatest; perhaps we need more than one.

Observations of the T-group Leader

In the fall a small group was formed comprising the major elements of the East Williston school community: two conservative parents who were Gentile, two liberal parents who were Jewish; the superintendent of schools, three teachers from the high school, and seven eleventh grade students chosen by the student government. The purpose of the group was to explore in depth the relations among the various segments of the school situation in order to increase understanding, improve communication, and promote a more joyful and productive relation among these representatives. If these aims could be achieved in this group, it was felt, perhaps ways could be found to spread it to the remainder of the community.

The group met for eight sessions of two to four hours each once a week, then went away together for a week-end, and returned for two final weekly meetings.

The beginning was difficult in that there was a reluctance to talk openly to each other at first. The group was conducted by Dr. William C. Schutz as an encounter group (or T-group) in which an attempt is made to create an atmosphere in which open and direct expression of feelings is encouraged and supported, with the emphasis

of the feelings in the immediate here-and-now situation. Dr. Julian Roberts served as the group observer but after several meetings the group insisted, and he acquiesced, that he become a member.

The group's recalcitrance to enter into open interchange was much greater on the part of the adults than the students. The teenagers were very anxious to express many feelings that they had apparently wanted to discuss for a very long time, while the adults kept wanting to "wait till we know each other better". The adult reluctance was especially acute in one teacher and one liberal parent, both of whom were extremely bright, articulate, and strongly opposed to the direction the group was taking. Despite this, several issues had been broached, though not penetratingly, including teenagers' use of marijuana, sexual attitudes, parental disciplines, relation of superintendent to teachers, and a reliving of the past school bond campaign.

A pivotal meeting came in the fifth or sixth session when the group leader stated that the group had reached an impasse -- either it was going in the direction that he wanted, toward more openness and directness, or the two rebels would prevail and the group would have intellectual discussions about prearranged topics. The starkness of the alternatives seemed to break the impasse and the rebels began to relook at the position they had taken and its effect on the group. From that point on the group seemed to move more easily into difficult areas and the rebels took a leading role in the direction of openness and candor.

The climax of the group occurred on the week-end when all members but one (due to national examinations) went to a Montauk Point hotel, changed into informal clothes and met as a group almost continuously for the entire week-end. The meeting broke up at about one o'clock Saturday night (Sunday morning) but almost everyone stayed up later with one or two or more others working through the issues that had been raised in the group meetings. Several didn't go to bed at all. The intensity and involvement of the group members with each other was very great at this time. One of the most dramatic incidents will illustrate the level of involvement which by now transcended the stereotyped role relations and went to the level of meeting each other as people. One student had a depressingly low amount of self-esteem, felt she was totally without value, had nothing to offer boys, or girls, and was, in short, what her parents had always conveyed to her, no good. She was asked to stand in the middle of the room and everyone in the group would express whatever real positive feelings they had toward her non-verbally. After she finally agreed to do this, the group members advanced toward her and swept her up in a series of embraces, back rubs, and other tender caresses, since there was a great deal of affection for her in the group. She cried long and deeply and finally fell into the arms of a teacher - the rebel, by the way - from whom she found great comfort. This extraordinarily moving event helped greatly to make the group feel very close to each

other as well as to the girl in the center.

The final two meetings consolidated the effects of the week-end and led the group members to make plans for a continuation and development of the experience.

Observations of the Chairman of the Social Studies Department

(recorded approximately six months after the conclusion of the pilot T-group)

Teacher #1

(a) a greater degree of self-awareness has developed; teacher reported to chairman that there has been noted change in attitude and relationship with his wife and children.

(b) a greater degree of willingness to listen and then to contribute to the social studies team; more honest reactions; not afraid to go out on a limb.

(c) a willingness to accept criticism reflected in his seeking others to observe his teaching, and in his request for reactions; communicates better with team leader; walls of misunderstanding now down.

(d) a greater attempt to listen to responses of students; although still a "performer", more prone to pose problems and seek solutions together with the students.

Teacher #2

(a) a rocking of his personal evaluation of "self"; although very capable and highly respected as teacher and team leader, now questions his own techniques; rethinking his philosophy of teaching.

(b) a change in the nature of his relationship with the team; although a strong team, his leadership was such that members awaited his lead in decisions; now he is questioning and they are receiving the "backlash" of his shifting.

(c) a development of very close relationship with and concern for his students; not as willing to be the autocratic but stimulating teacher, but rather the stimulating teacher-leader.

Analysis of the Pilot Project

An analysis of the project may be summed up as follows:

1. Enough positive feeling about the value of this experience was seen in the continued interest of those involved to:

   a. Plan for future experimentation.

   b. Participate in a sharing session with the school board, and with members of the community at a meeting held to obtain volunteers for the next project.

2. T-group and its objectives seem to be related to generally expressed ideals of democratic group process. Therefore the hypothesis that such training might make the classroom learning of problems of democracy more real and meaningful to the students and teachers emerged.

3. If the T-group can be a unit in classroom procedure, would there be a greater chance for the momentary gains in group and individual development to be more lasting than those indicated in the pilot study? Certainly, even in the case of the one adult who claimed to have gone "back to my old conservative self" there was also the indication that even then there was some difference which as yet could not be verbalized.

The Proposed Project - Procedures

The pilot group members identified the following key issues as those demanding further investigation:

a. Can sensitivity training produce a classroom climate that will encourage more fruitful and more enduring learning experiences?

b. Does the T-group experience suggest that in order to examine relevant content and effective teaching procedures, educators must consider the affective concerns of students as well as their cognitive needs?

c. Can a social studies curriculum, which frequently deals with those areas involving attitude development, be so directed that the class climate will allow students to develop a sense of freedom to examine interpersonal feelings and opinions? Can it help to encourage the development of good listening habits? Can both teachers and students become more aware of the verbal and non-verbal responses that further or interfere with the development of such a social-emotional classroom climate?

d. How necessary is it to find appropriate ways to make decisions with regard to school matters that will involve students, faculty, administration and community participation?

e. Can the training of small groups (such as that participating in the pilot project) generate further training of others in this school system and community?

The big question remains. Did the Board invest its donation wisely? If to "know thyself" is still a paramount concern of democratic education, then there is no doubt that even this subjectively demonstrated evidence points to an awareness of self, an awareness of how others perceive self as essential gains to be acted upon further in school and community experiences.

Respectfully submitted,

Julian Roberts
Director

Appendix A

Name_____

Now we would like your evaluation of the group's effect on several specific personal characteristics. For each characteristic, please indicate how much you feel you have changed in comparison with how much you would usually change over this period of time (about 5 months). Next to each item mark the number from the following answer categories that comes closest to your feelings about how the group affected you.

---

1. Tremendously decreased
2. Definitely decreased
3. Slightly decreased
4. No difference
5. Slightly increased
6. Definitely increased
7. Tremendously increased

For example, if you feel your self-confidence has increased slightly more than it ordinarily would in five months, write:

__5__ 29. self-confidence

Please be sure to answer every item.

_____ 1. ability to assert beliefs and feelings
_____ 2. effectiveness on the job (or school or home)
_____ 3. friendliness
_____ 4. relaxed feeling when with people
_____ 5. honest in dealing with people
_____ 6. willingness to speak about my feelings
_____ 7. outgoingness
_____ 8. productivity on the job (in school or home)
_____ 9. sensitivity to people's feelings
_____10. interest in people
_____11. intellectual understanding of people
_____12. general liking for people
_____13. appreciation of people
_____14. respect for people's abilities
_____15. ability to be close to people
_____16. acceptance of people
_____17. insight about people
_____18. feeling of warmth toward people
_____19. comfort in relating to people
_____20. tense feeling when alon with people
_____21. being realistic in relations with people
_____22. tolerance of self
_____23. criticism of self
_____24. liking for self
_____25. acceptance of self
_____26. respect for capabilities of self
_____27. enjoyment in being along
_____28. intellectual understanding of self
_____29. self-confidence
_____30. general anxiety
_____31. flexibility
_____32. defensiveness
_____33. realistic concept of self
_____34. responsiveness of people toward me
_____35. trust in me by people
_____36. friendliness of people toward me
_____37. ease of communication with me by people
_____38. respect for me by people
_____39. people's willingness to confide in me
_____40. favorable reactions to me

Please check to make sure you have responded to <u>each</u> item.

2/9/67

Appendix B

EAST WILLISTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Communications-Sensitivity Group

Questionnaire

Name_____

1. What do you consider to have been the most significant moment (or moments) of our recent group experience?

2. If you were asked by a stranger to describe your recent group experience and to indicate what you think the most important outcomes from this experience to be, how would you respond?

3. Is there anything else you would like to react to with regard to any aspect of the group experience?

May 1966